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ABSTRACT

Using data from three studies, this paper focuses on competency education trends in California in the area of writing. The studies reviewed in the paper examined (1) the competency examinations produced by students in one high school in 1980, (2) the various means employed in 1981 by five school districts in the San Francisco Bay area to implement California State's Assembly Bill 3408 (1976), as amended in Assembly Bill 65 (1977), mandating competency, and (3) competency trends at the college level in 1982 and the extent to which entering freshman students exhibited improved writing skills. The paper then presents data from a 1983 study that revisited the five school districts and the various colleges and universities surveyed in 1981 and 1982. The paper reveals that changes in both attitude and curriculum have occurred within a short time in the schools, and that changes are also evident on the state level, with the Department of Education moving from minimal competency to maximum proficiency and greater control. It concludes that the competency bill has been the catalyst for such changes and that future studies need to continue to assess students' growth and competency trends. The paper includes samples of student competency examinations. (FL)

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Competency, California-Style, Revisited

Paper presented at the National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention
(73rd, Denver, Colorado, November 18-23, 1983)

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Abstract

This presentation focuses on competency trends in California in the area of composition. This 1983 research project provides an update for three previous studies. The first study, done in 1980, analyzed competency examinations written by students in the Acalanes Union High School District. The 1981 study showed the various means employed by five school districts in the San Francisco Bay Area to implement AB 65, the state bill mandating competency. In 1982, local colleges were surveyed to see if entering freshmen were exhibiting improved writing skills and to learn what trends existed at the university level. This presentation synthesizes the findings of these three studies and shares current trends, which pave the way for a feeling of qualified optimism. It includes a summary of AB 65 with its emphasis on minimal competency and local control. The presentaion shares data from the California State Department of Education, revealing no marked improvement in verbal skills since the inception of AB 65. It also contains samples of minimally-competent compositions written by students in the Acalanes High School District in 1979 and 1983,which are placed in juxtaposition with samples of highly-sophisticated excerpts used by the University of California at Berkeley to evaluate the writing skills of incoming freshmen. In this 1983 study, the five school districts are revisited. The presentation emphasizes that competency procedures remain diverse and that two of the districts, San Ramon Valley Unified and San Francisco, have made innovative changes at all levels. In this study, the six colleges and universities surveyed in 1982 are revisited. The presentation stresses that within a short time changes in both attitude and curriculum have occurred. The study also reports on changes at the state level, which indicate that the California State Department of Education is moving from minimal competency to maximum proficiency and greater control. The presentation concludes that AB 65 has been the catalyst for such changes and that future studies need to continue to assess students' growth and competency trends.

COMPETENCY, CALIFORNIA-STYLE, REVISITED

By

Judith A. Chinn

Competency is a vital issue of the 1980's. Many states have already mandated that students pass competency examinations before graduation. Most states that have not yet adopted such programs are in the process of weighing the advantages and disadvantages of various proposals. Newspaper articles continue to inform the public of declining verbal scores and skills and also to present the pros and cons of competency testing. As educators, we are acutely aware of the need to make students more proficient writers, readers, and mathematicians; yet we wonder about the impact of competency testing. "Are the ends justifying the means?" we ask.

In this presentation, I shall examine competency trends in California in the area of composition. My findings are based on four studies of competency, which focused on school districts and colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the first study, completed in 1980, I examined competency examinations written by students in the Acalanes Union High School District. In 1981, I surveyed five school districts in the San Francisco Bay Area to compare the means employed by diverse communities to implement the state-mandated competency requirements. A third study, done in 1982, focused on neighboring colleges to examine the impact of competency at the university level. This year I revisited the school districts and the colleges to see what progress had been made by students and to see what trends were occurring at the state level and also within the local districts and colleges.

In my presentation, after summarizing the state bill which authorized competency, I shall share some discouraging data based on students' scores and competency requirements. However, the majority of the presentation is concerned with

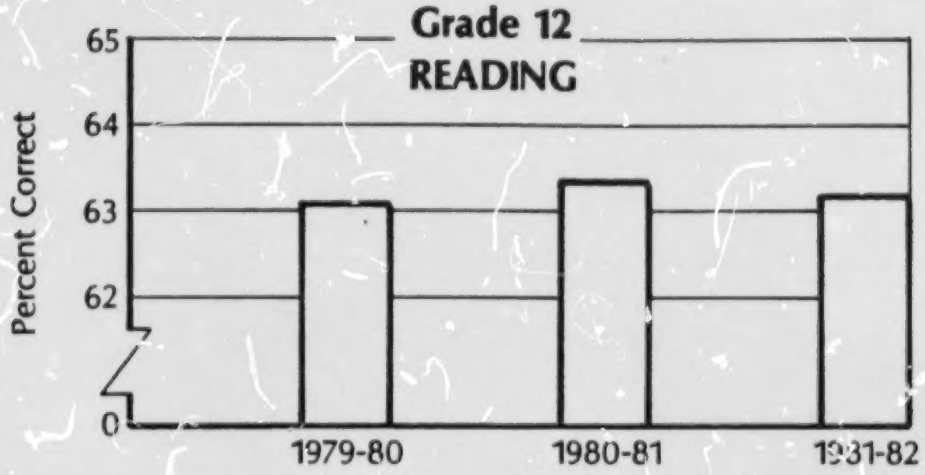
innovations occurring within local districts and at universities. Such changes allow us to feel qualified optimism that state-mandated competency will ultimately effect positive changes in students' writing.

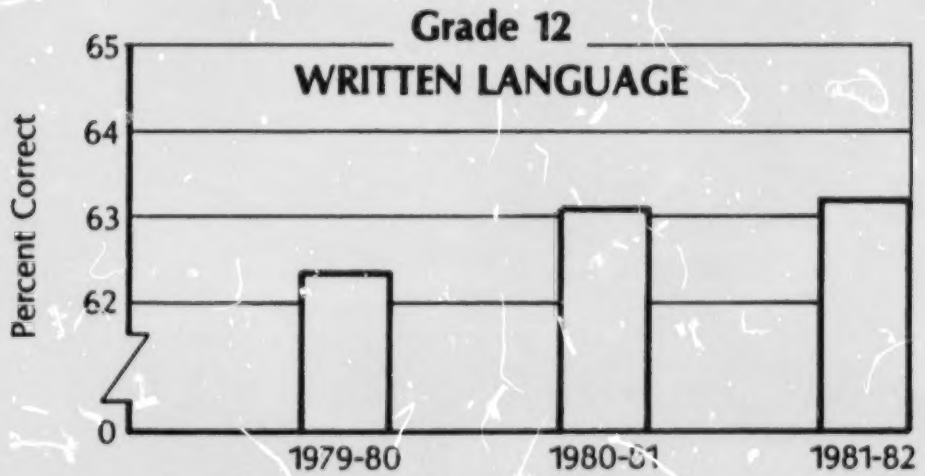
In California, the intent of competency is the mastery of "minimum standards." The provisions of the law are found in California State's Assembly Bill 3408, passed in 1976, as amended in Assembly Bill 65 (1977). AB 65 requires the mandatory testing of all students at elementary, junior high, and high school levels in three areas: reading, computation, and writing. The law requires that each district adopt its own standards of proficiency. It states that after June 1980 no student may graduate until mastery of skills in each of these three areas is achieved. The role of the state is limited to "provision of technical assistance and training to assist districts in meeting the requirements of the law." Thus, in the '70's and early '80's two things were stressed: minimal competency and local control. Therefore, since the inception of AB 65, educators as well as the public have frequently been concerned with the low standards and the inequality of standards between districts.

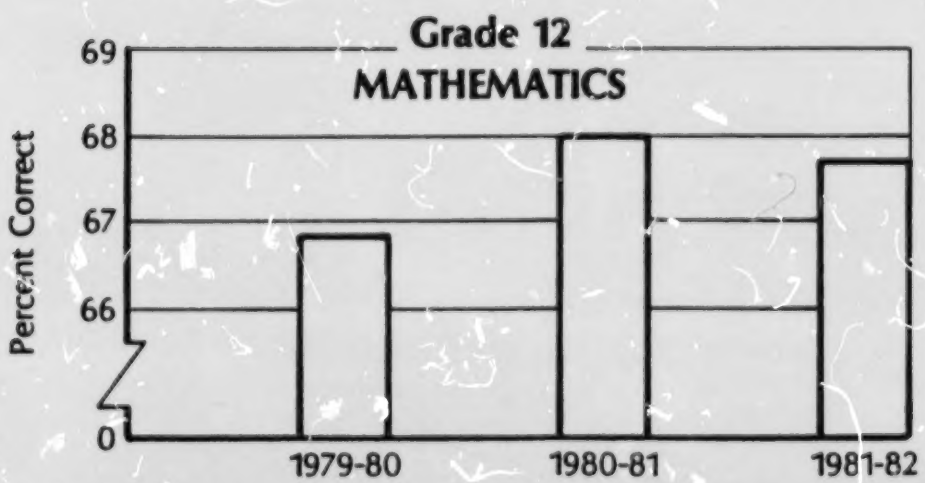
Statistics compiled by the California State Department of Education confirm the skeptics' worst fears. Graph I indicates that on 1981-82 achievement tests students in Grade 12 received either lower scores or made statistically insignificant gains in reading, mathematics, and written language. Graph II shows that, despite state-mandated competency requirements, students in Grade 12 lag behind the national average in all areas. Graph III shows the Verbal SAT Scores for California and the nation from 1972 through 1983. None of us can afford to be smug when we see that scores have drastically declined since the '70's thoughout the United States. It's also a bit depressing to note that despite the emphasis on composition and competency throughout California since AB 65 was passed in 1977, verbal scores continue to plummet.

GRAPH I

California Student Achievement in Basic Skills



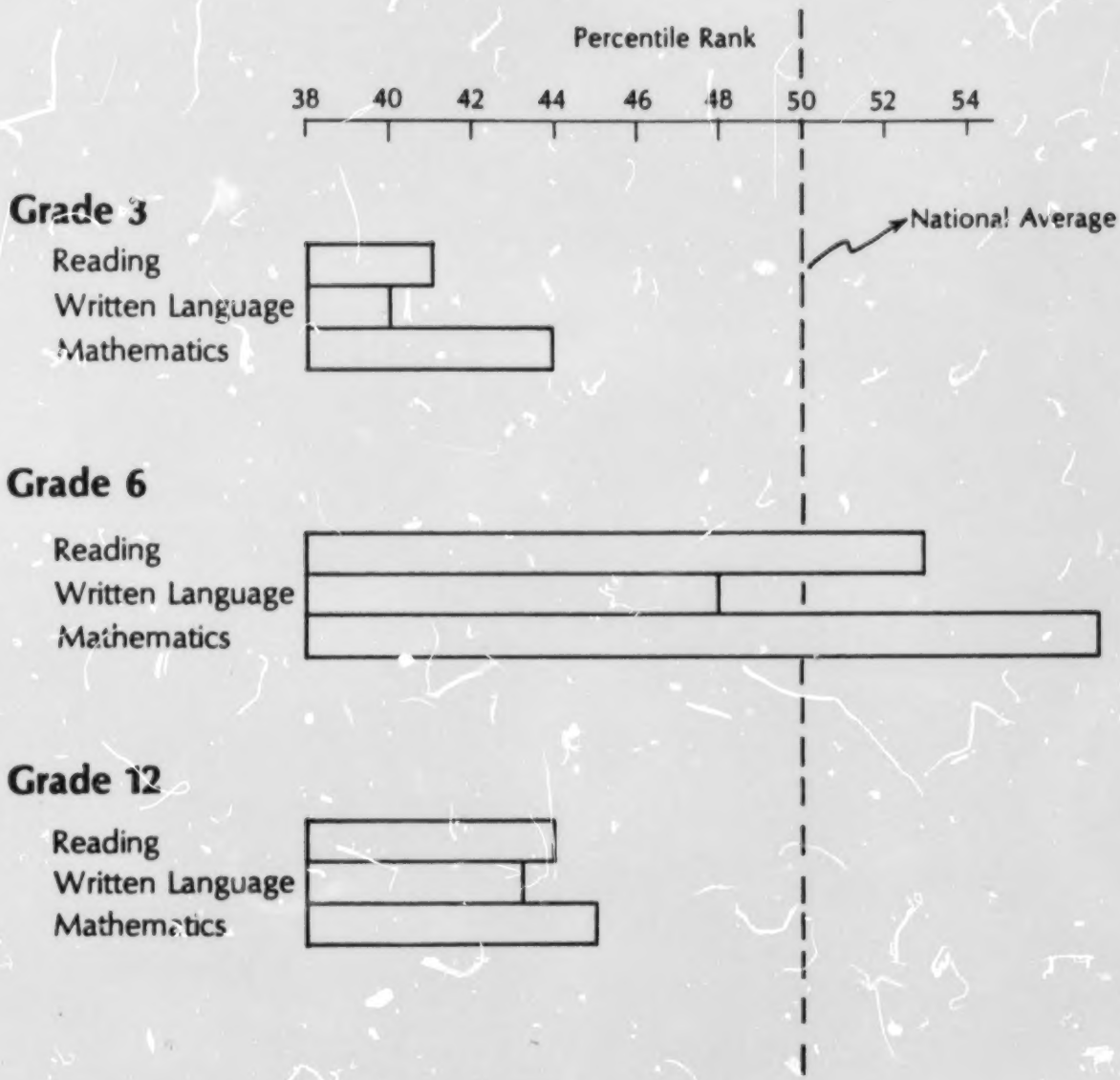




California State Department of Education 9/83

GRAPH II

California Student Achievement Compared to Nation, 1981-82



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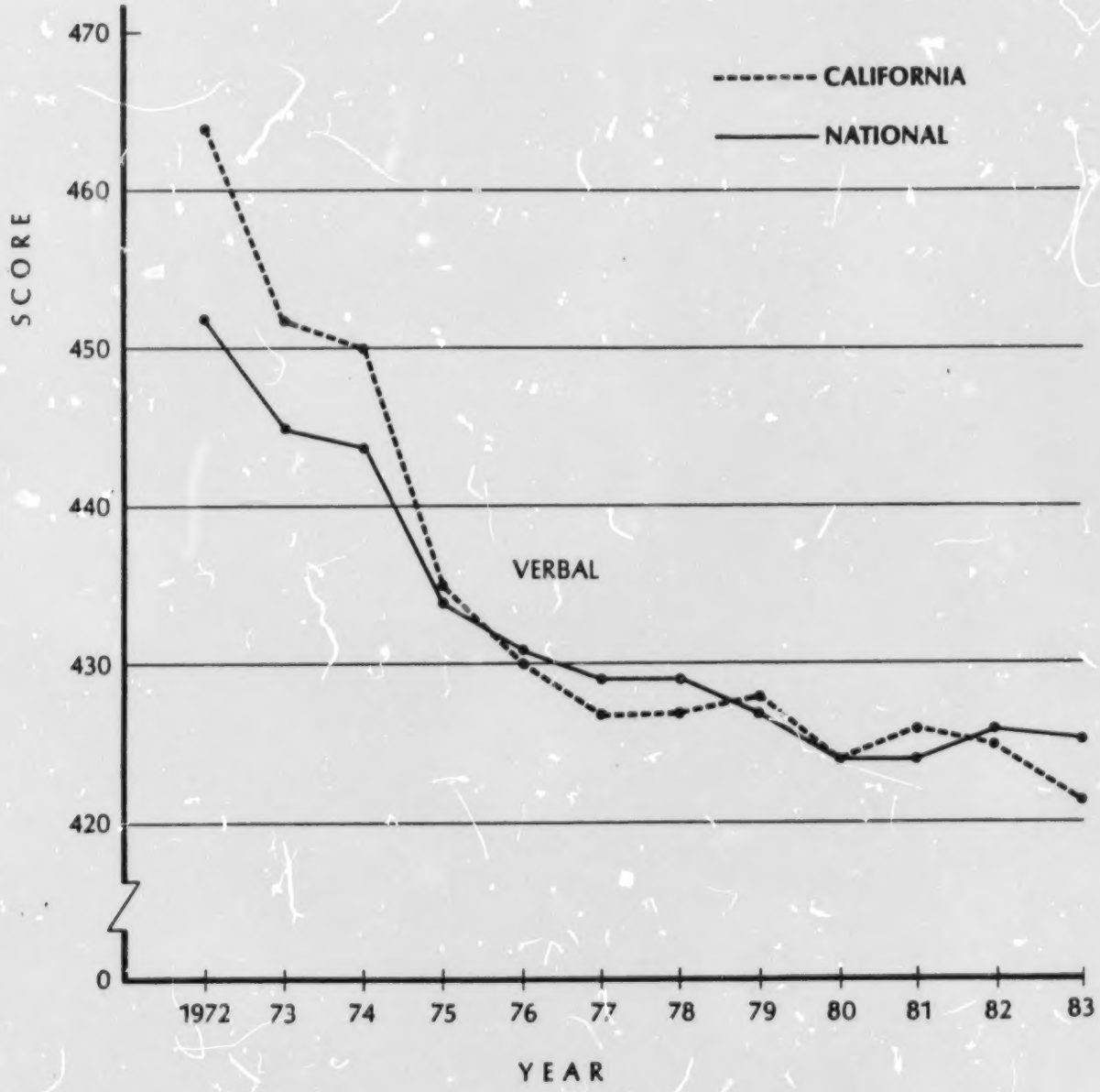
GRAPH III

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Scores for High School Seniors in California and the United States, 1972 - 1983



California State Department of Education 9/83

Competency requirements and acceptable results pose an additional concern. The majority of competency examinations require descriptive writing, based on personal experience. Most districts use a holistic system to evaluate these compositions. In the Acalanes Union High School District, these descriptive essays are graded from 1 (low) to 9 (high) by two readers. In order to pass, a student must receive a total of at least seven points: in other words, 3+4. This bare minimum represents an evaluation which is often highly controversial in regard to the student's competency. The first two writing samples illustrate two compositions which received a 3+4 from readers in the Acalanes Union High School District in 1979. In this examination, students discussed a change in their life. In Writing Sample I, the student discusses his poor work "habbits". In Writing Sample II, the student tells how he got "involved in stports." We might question the writing proficiency of both students. When I revisited the Acalanes Union High School District in 1983, I saw evidence of similar evaluations. For this competency exam, students were asked to describe a memorable place. Writing Sample III was judged competent since it too received a 3+4. In this composition, the writer tells why "New Jersy Is such a fun place to be In." A comparison of the 1979 examinations and those written in 1983 reveals a similarity in assignment and in the evaluation of minimal competency. From these three writing assignments we can sense the difficulty in setting minimal standards.

Such minimal expectations become even more striking if we look at Graph IV, compiled by the California State Department of Education, revealing that four out of seven students entering the University of California are required to take remedial English. These students have failed an entrance exam which requires that they analyze sophisticated passages, such as Literary Excerpt I, "The Economics of Wilderness" by Garrett Hardin, or Literary Excerpt II, "Equality's Uneven Hand" by Thomas Griffith. These two selections emphasize the dichotomy between university requirements and minimal competency expectations.

COMPETENCY EXAMINATIONS FROM THE ACALANES UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

WRITING SAMPLE I ACALANES UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 1979 Rating: 3 + 4

When I was in eight grade I was pretty much of a raw raw, jock; but when I hit ninth grade there was a drastic change. I became a head; a person that likes to party alot.

My friends and I liked to get wasted before football games, dances and just to get wasted. Turning from a raw-raw into a head showed considerably in my work habbits and study habbits. This change showed in my grades, and grades are very important. This change also made me very lazy. . . . .

WRITING SAMPLE II ACALANES UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 1979 Rating: 3 + 4

The most important thing in my live was ~~was~~ when I got involved in sportes. I played in games all the time. I played ~~at~~ at school and after school. I played everyday of the week. I played soccer, football, basketball and baseball when ever I could. I like to play in sports all I can. When I get bord or have nothing to do I play in sports. That is the only thing I can think off.

ACALANES DISTRICT WRITING ASSESSMENT

TOPIC

Describe in some detail a memorable place you have experienced. While helping your readers get a detailed picture of the place you should also be sure to share with them your emotions and thoughts which make it memorable. The "place" may be real, or it may exist only in your imagination.

WRITING SAMPLE III ACALANES UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 1983 Rating: 3 + 4

New Jersey is a very memorable place to me. About 5 years ago my dad moved to N New Jersy, because he was transfered.

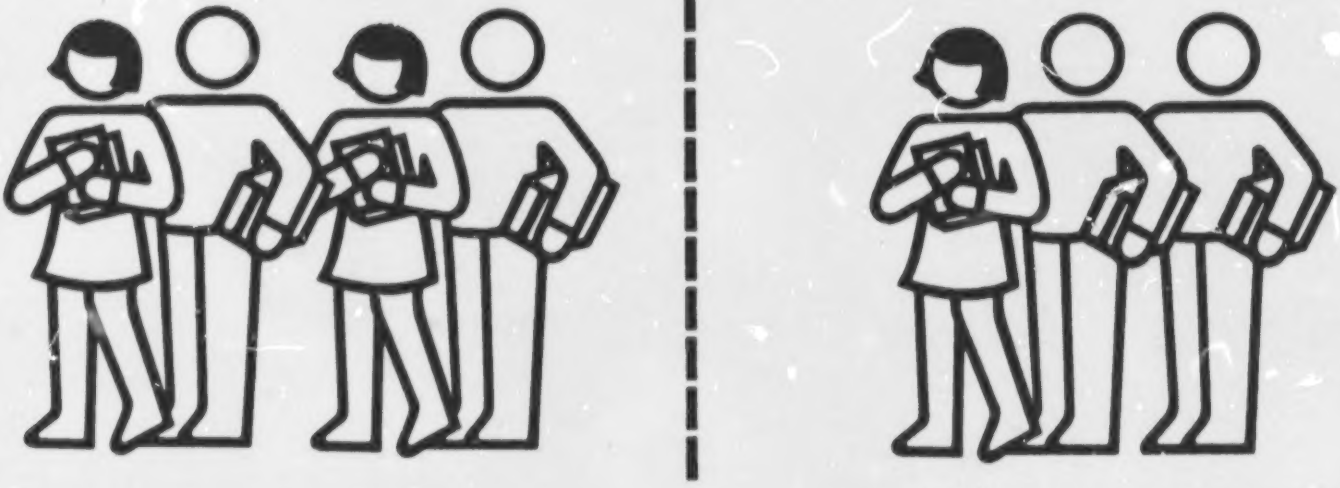
When I visited him all summer and on Christmas Vacation. As I departed I looked all around, paused a second, and ran over Quickley. And there stood my dad and brother Sterling. We walked down the smoke filled Lobby to wait for the baggage. Sudenly we hear a loud clank, as the motor of the conveyor belt started to move. After a while we see a bright Orange bag apear over the belt. I yell to my brother, "I'll get it". I reach over the railing and Straining my arms as I lifted the bag up.

Finally I get to see the state of New Jersy. From in the car. All I could See was dull tan License plates, or Rusted old cars From the Salt on the Roads. On the side of the road there was a Small brown Puppy Rolling Freely in the Bright Freshly powdered Snow.

New Jersy is such a fun place to be in. The winter, You can Ride bikes or Ice have Snowball fights, Ice skates, Skiing, Ice Skaters, or Snow-mobiling. Thats why I think New Jersy is a memorable

University of California Freshman English Requirement, Fall 1982

4 out of 7 freshmen required to take remedial English



GRAPH IV

LITERARY EXCERPTS (Competency Topics Used by the University of California at Berkeley)

I. An Excerpt from "The Economics of Wilderness" by Garrett Hardin

There is a public interest in making the wilderness* as difficult and dangerous as it legitimately can be. There is also, I think, a well-founded suspicion that our life has become, if anything, too safe for the best psychological health, particularly among the young. The ever greater extension of the boundaries of legal liability has produced a controlled and fenced-in environment in which it is almost impossible to hurt oneself--unless one tries. The behavior of the young clearly indicates that they really try. Drag races, road races, "rumbles," student sit-ins, marches, and tauntings of the police--all these activities look like the behavior of people looking for danger. I do not wish to deny that some of the activities may arise from other motivations also, for example, idealistic political beliefs. I am only saying that it looks like deliberate seeking of danger is part of the motivation of our obstreperous young. I think it is an important part. I think we would do well to tear down some of the fences that now deprive people of the possibility of danger. A wilderness without rescue services would contribute to the stability of society.

II. An Excerpt from "Equality's Uneven Hand" by Thomas Griffith

(1) There are subjects that bother and pursue us throughout our lives. I don't mean ruling passions that obsess one--as sex and money and power do--but unanswered, unshakable questions, such as religious faith or doubt, that haunt one. In my own case that question I can never resolve concerns equality; my attitude towards it oscillates constantly, like a trembling needle on a dial, and I've about decided that I'm never going to come to a still point on the subject, and be at rest with it. In its blessings and int its dangers, I think equality is the great, the basic American question.

(2) We are strengthened by equality, we are weakened by it; we celebrate it, we repudiate it. The question haunts Americans in particular because engraved early on our brainpans is the dubious assertion that "all men are created equal." A less ambiguous equality, however, as in one man, one vote, is the essence of democracy; the notion that I'm as good as you are is at the heart of American informality. Yet equality also implies a leveling, a resistance to every individual's longing to stand out from the crowd, and thus wars with that other basic American trait, the pursuit of success and distinction. Equality is not a subject can be seen whole; it shows itself clearly in facets that catch the light at one moment. Perhaps these facets put together add up to a whole. I hope....

(9) The truth is that inequality has two strings to its bow, and equality but one. Equality is the world of fairness. Inequality at its worst is the world of privilege--unearned, uncaring, and often arragant. But inequality is also the world of achievement, of excellence.

In 1981 I had surveyed five school districts in the San Francisco Bay Area. I returned to each of these districts in the fall of 1983 to see what changes had occurred in evaluation procedures, student results, and curriculum. Three of these districts - Acalanes Union High School District, Berkeley, and Piedmont - showed little evidence of change in evaluation and curriculum. However, two districts, San Ramon Valley Unified and San Francisco, exemplied the type of changes that state-mandated competency requirements can effect in a progressive milieu.

In the Acalanes Union High School District, no major changes have occurred. Students are still tested in the fall of their freshman year. They are required to write an expository essay, which is graded holistically by two raters on a scale of 1-9. In the past, staff development money was provided to accumulate the data from the scored compostions; however, funding has been cut back, and volunteers are now used to accumulate the data from scored compositions. Therefore, it takes longer to tabulate the results. There have been no innovations in curriculum.

In the Berkeley Public School District, the competency evaluation has remained unchanged. Although the state mandates that students be tested in high school, in Berkeley the students are required to write an essay which varies from personal to expository at the end of their eighth grade year. The tests are graded holistically on a scale of 1-4 by high school teachers. Students who receive a 1 or 2 fail; those who receive a 3 or 4 pass. Ms. Jacqueline White, Chairman of the English Department at Berkeley High School and coordinator of the competency program, said that most students pass and that she feels "qualified optimism" in regard to the proficiency results. She emphasized that the few remaining students who continue to fail the composition competency test present a challenge, often great in a school system where English teachers have "too many students and too many classes."

The Piedmont School District's competency evaluation differs greatly from that of the Acalanes Union High School District and the Berkeley Public School District. Piedmont's composition competency program consists of a four-part business-oriented packet. High school students in Piedmont are required to write an application for a job, a business letter, and a resumé and to address an envelope. I have always thought that it was interesting that an affluent, upper-class community such as Piedmont would have such a practical exam. Ms. Judith Norberg, who directs that program, explained her district's rationale. "Even students who go to Harvard need to apply for jobs," she emphasized. She said that most teachers "hate to teach practical skills" and that the students in the Piedmont district were continually required to write expository papers. Piedmont's philosophy then is to prepare all students for coping with the necessities of life; therefore, the competency exam reflects a community concern to broaden the skills of the students. Few changes have been made in the competency program since its inception.

In the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, the competency program has been expanded although the evaluation procedures at the secondary level have remained essentially the same. Tenth grade students are given five writing tasks: a business letter, a personal letter, a form to fill out, a series of instructions, and an expository paragraph. As in the Acalanes Union High School District, the amount of money allocated for the competency program has decreased. However, some positive changes have occurred. Firstly, there has been pressure from the community to raise standards. Several years ago, students were required to pass four of the five writing assignments. They are now required to pass all of them. Secondly,"early warning tests" are mandatory throughout elementary and junior high school: at the third grade; at fifth grade, in which students must write a paragraph; and at seventh grade, in which students must successfully complete four of five tasks: a business letter, a paragraph, an envelope, an instructional form, and sentence-combining. Expanding the program has brought

greater continuity to the program and has proved beneficial. According to Ms. Barbara O'Rand, who coordinates the competency program, "more children are passing the tests at all levels."Initially, the San Ramon School District had allocated a vast budget for competency testing, which allowed them to hire outside consultants to make up the tests and score them. When the cost rose to $6.50 per student, the district decided to look elsewhere. They now use the Elementary Consortium, part of the Santa Clara County Project, to help them prepare new tests.

The most dramatic changes have occurred in the San Francisco School District. Initially, the proficiency test in the area of writing consisted of two parts: (1) a multiple choice section, consisting of spelling, capitalizing, punctuation, vocabulary, structural analysis, filling out forms, and survival skills, and (2) a short paragraph, holistically evaluated by teachers at the student's school site. Recently, this requirement has been made more comprehensive. Students are now given 50 - 60 minutes to write a composition consisting of several paragraphs. These are holistically evaluated by readers at a central site, who have been trained by teachers from the Bay Area Writing Project. Substitutes are hired to relieve the readers of their classroom responsibilities for that day. Each paper is read twice. You can imagine what a Herculean task this must be: 13,500 papers multiplied by two readings equals 27,000 papers. Three percent of the students do not pass the composition competency test before June of their graduation year; nevertheless, some of these students pass during summer school.

As in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, positive changes are being effected at all levels. Students are now being evaluated at the third grade level, using short answer responses. In 1984, they will be required to write a short paper. For the first time, fifth graders are required to write a descriptive paper, which will be evaluated holistically at the central site

by fifth grade teachers. Students not passing in January will be retested in May. Students in junior high school must now pass a composition proficiency requirement. They take the test as seventh graders. If they need to retake the test, it is offered in the fall and the spring of their eighth grade year. The composition competency program in the San Francisco School District has thus expanded its focus to include students at all levels. Involving elementary and junior high school teachers in the evaluation process is also creating greater awareness in teachers of the various components necessary for effective composition and of the need to teach writing techniques at every grade level.

In summary, although some San Francisco Bay Area school districts have not changed their competency program, in other districts the testing has become more comprehensive and students are being evaluated at many levels. In these districts, teachers are becoming more knowledgeable about good writing, effective teaching techniques,and sophisticated methods of evaluation.

Some interesting changes are also occurring at the college level, both in attitude and in curriculum. In 1983 I revisited the institutions I had surveyed in 1982, which included San Francisco State College, California State University at Hayward, San Francisco Community College, Merritt College in Oakland, University of California at Berkeley, and Stanford. In 1983, several of the coordinators of the writing programs felt that there was some slight improvement in writing quality. A noticeable change was apparent in the attitudes of many of the coordinators. In 1982 these educators felt frustration and annoyance that incoming freshmen were so ill-prepared. In 1983, the coordinators seemed to be focusing their energy on positive measures that their departments could take to improve students rather than harping on what might have been. Thus, many basic freshman writing courses are being revised and expanded to meet the needs of incoming students.

San Francisco State College has increased the number of remedial writing courses it offers. Bill Robinson, who coordinates the freshman English program, has seen no evidence of improved writing in high school graduates. He stressed that students should take English all four years in high school; nevertheless, he emphasized that "quantity does not equal quality."

At California State University at Hayward, the basic program has recently been restructured to include two courses: one on building sentences and paragraphs and the other, on the essay. Formerly, students were offered one course, which they repeated until they completed it successfully. Joyce Stith, who directs the program, feels that some of the incoming freshmen are better skilled in grammar.

San Francisco Community College now requires exit exams in which students have to be judged sufficiently competent as writers to graduate. Presently the instructors of freshman English at San Francisco Community College are participating in workshops on holistic evaluation given by members of the Bay Area Writing Project. The writing curriculum has been expanded. Don Cunningham, who directs the writing program, does not see any improvement in the writing skills of incoming freshmen.

At Merritt College in Oakland, students can now take writing courses which range from three to five units. Although Glenna Bryant, program coordinator, does not sense a change in the quality of the incoming students, she feels that students are showing an increased willingness to raise their level of skill. She said that instructors in 1983 began to work as a team, thus introducing a new era of cooperation among the faculty at Merritt College.

The basic English program at the University of California at Berkeley has not changed. Kim Davis, who heads the Subject A program, said that pass rate on the exam taken by entering freshmen was formerly 48%, but that it is

now 50%. Mr. Davis attributes this improvement to various writing projects which have been innovated throughout California.

At Stanford, students can sign up for a multitude of freshman English courses and also for individual tutoring. This curriculum remains unchanged. Paul Plouffe, who instructs freshmen at both Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley, feels that these students do "equally well...or equally poorly." He feels that students at these two universities are "most deficient in critical thinking."

In summary, although the majority of the coordinators do not yet see evidence of greater writing proficiency in the entering freshmen, the attitudes of these individuals and the new course offerings suggest some positive changes. Presently, college instructors and coordinators of freshmen English programs seem less critical of the secondary schools and more eager to bring about change, even if this entails revamping their own curriculum. In 1982,coordinators appeared to dwell on the frustrating aspects of remediation. In 1983,they seem to view this task as a challenge, at times exciting though tedious. Last year I concluded that "obviously a gulf exists between university educators and secondary teachers." Presently, in the San Francisco Bay Area, this seems to be changing.

Changes are also occurring at the state level. According to Cindy Katz, a research analyst in the Office of Program Evaluation and Research at the California State Department of Education, presently very little is being done at the State Department of Education to implement the competency program. AB 65 is taken for granted and the school districts are expected to comply. Instead, the state is taking an active role in striving for maximum proficiency. One focus is state graduation requirements. Since the early '70's, there have been no state-mandated graduation requirements in California. However, a new

California Code of Education has recently been passed, which goes into effect in 1986. According to this new code, students are required to take English three years. Requirements are also set for math, science, social studies, physical education, and foreign language. Thus, the state is taking an active role in standardizing the education received by students throughout California. The second major change is the development of an incentive program, which rewards teachers and school districts with money if tangible improvement occurs. This program is sometimes referred to as "Dollars for Scholars" or "Cash for CAP [California Assessment Program]". The state will be scrutinizing test results, attrition rates, and effective teaching. Ms. Katz said that although 1% of the students were denied diplomas because they had failed the competency exams, a much higher percentage didn't graduate because they had failed to attend class. The new Code of Education and the incentive program both indicate the state's present emphasis on maximum proficiency and the upgrading of standards.

In general, the results from the 1983 study allow us to feel optimism, albeit qualified, in assessing the long-range effects of AB 65 on students' competency in the area of writing. Even though the statistics from the California State Department of Education's Office of Program Evaluation and Research reveal no marked improvement, the graphs do provide baselines for future evaluations. Changes are occurring locally. Although some districts have been satisfied with their initial approach to fulfilling the competency requirement, other districts have expanded their programs so that students are assessed throughout elementary and junior high school as well as senior high school. Such districts have initiated inservice programs and placed greater emphasis on the teaching of writing skills at all levels. Changes in both attitude and curriculum are evident at local colleges and universities. Coordinators of basic writing programs seem less inclined to bemoan the lack of skill of

incoming freshmen and more eager to adapt their curriculum to meet the needs of their students. At the state level, the California State Department of Education is innovating changes which indicate a more directive approach than the laissez-faire philosophy espoused in the '70's. AB 65 and its emphasis on locally-controlled programs for achieving minimal competency are taken as a matter of course, feared neither by the public nor by educators. At the present time, however, the state has shifted its emphasis from minimal competency to maximum proficiency by introducing a new code of education which upgrades minimum graduation requirements and by offering an incentive program.

Have state-mandated competency requirements been the catalyst for these changes? This seems likely. AB 65 has forced school districts to evaluate their writing programs. This, in turn, has fostered positive changes in evaluation, curriculum, and teachers' awareness. AB 65 has also given a raison d'être to the writing projects which have sprung up throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and served as models throughout the nation. In a domino fashion, innovations are also occurring at the college level. In retrospect, it appears that state-mandated competency is not an end, but rather a means of developing stronger programs and more stringent requirements.

The findings in this study form the basis for future research. They suggest the importance of continuing to document the progress (or lack of progress) made by California students, because, ultimately, the proof rests in the results. By revisiting school districts, colleges, and universities, researchers can analyze the changes wrought by state-mandated competency. By scrutinizing competency programs and composition gains within specific districts, future studies might validate which approaches and innovations have yielded the greatest success.

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Appendix

I. Coordinators of High School Composition Competency Programs

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GLENNA BRYANT Coordinator of Freshman English Merritt College Oakland, California

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NCTE ANNUAL CONVENTION, DENVER, NOVEMBER 1983

"COMPETENCY, CALIFORNIA-STYLE, REVISITED"

I. INTRODUCTION [Graphs]
II. BACKGROUND (AB 3408 and AB 65)
III. HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS (Berkeley, Acalanes Union, Piedmont, San Ramon Valley Unified, and San Francisco) [Writing Samples]
IV. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (San Francisco State, University of California at Berkeley, Stanford, California State University at Hayward, San Francisco Community College, and Merritt) [Sample Assignment]
V. TRENDS AND POLICIES AT THE STATE LEVEL
VI. CONCLUSION

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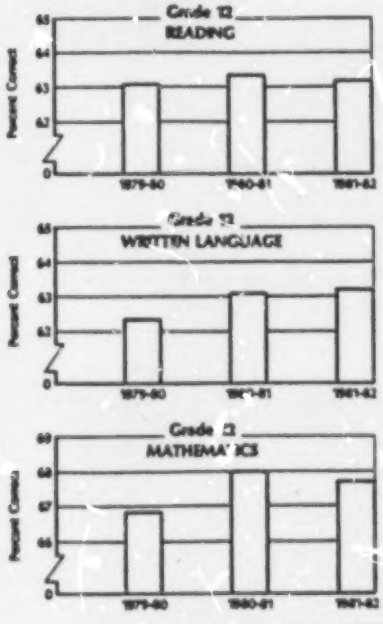
PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT IN CALIFORNIA 1980 Status Report on Implementation of California's Pupils Proficiency Law Publications Sales California State Department of Education P.O. Box 271 Sacramento, CA 95802

RAISING EXPECTATIONS: MODEL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS June 10, 1983 California State Department of Education Publications Sales P.O. Box 271 Sacramento, CA 95802

HANDBOOK FOR PLANNING AN EFFECTIVE WRITING PROGRAM (K-12) California State Department of Education 1982 Available through NCTE

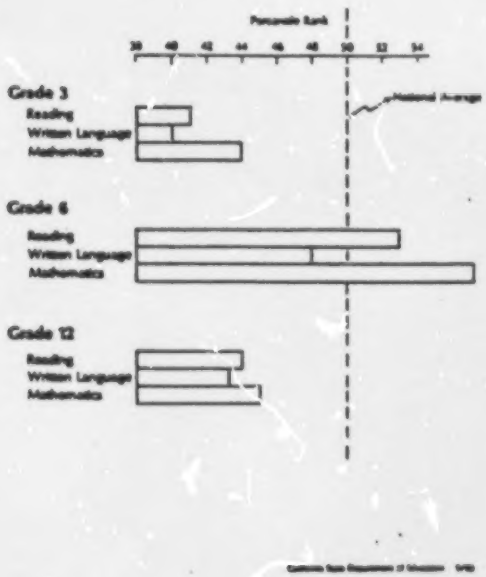
I

California Student Achievement in Basic Skills



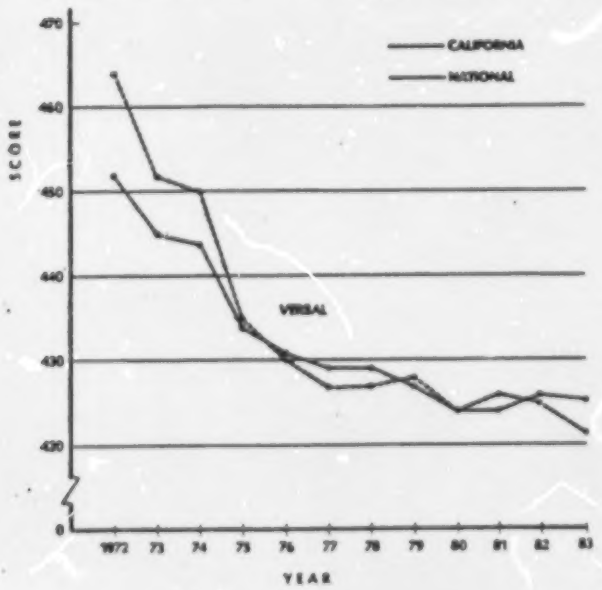
II

California Student Achievement Compared to Nation, 1981-82



III

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Scores
for
High School Seniors in California and the United States, 1972 - 1983



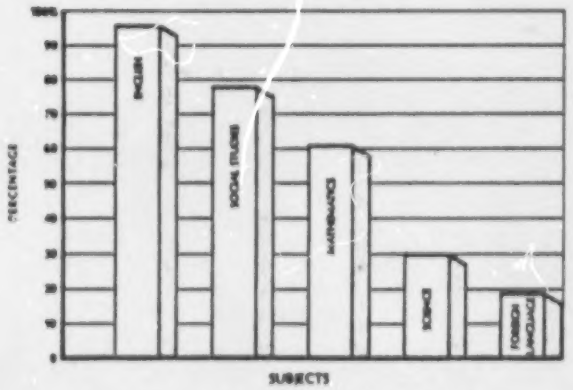
IV

University of California Freshman
English Requirement, Fall 1982

4 out of 7 freshmen required to take remedial English

V

Percentage of California Seniors
taking three or more years of each subject



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COMPETENCY EXAMINATIONS
ACALANES UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1979 & 1983

PASS 3 + 4 = 7

When I was in eight grade I was pretty much of a raw raw, jock; but when I hit ninth grade there was a drastic change. I became a head; a person that likes to party alot.

My friends and I liked to get wasted before football games, dances and just to get wasted. Turning from a raw-raw into a head showed considerably in my work habbits and study habbits. This change showed in my grades, and grades are very important. This change also made me very lazy...

New Jersey is a very memorable place to me. About 5 years ago my dad moved to N New Jersy, because he was transfered.

When I visited him all summer and on Christmas Vacation, As I departed I ~~was~~ met all aboard, paused a second, and ran over Quickley And there stood my dad and brother Sterling. We walked down ~~the~~ Smoke filled hobby to ~~the~~ wait for the baggage. Sudenly we hear a loud shout, as the motor of the conveyor belt started to move. After a while we see a bright Orange bag above above the rest. I yell to my brother, "I'll get it", I reach over the railing and Stretching my arms as I lifted the bag up.

Finly I get to se the state of New Jersly. Then in the car. All I could see was dull tan trees

COMPETENCY TOPICS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT BERKELEY

Here is an excerpt from a longer essay by Thomas Griffith, an editor and free-lance writer whose work appears regularly in The Atlantic Monthly, where this essay was published in January 1978. Read through it carefully, following his argument and testing his assumptions against your own. You are free to underline passages and make marginal notes on this sheet.

Equality's Uneven Hand

(2) We are strengthened by equality, we are weakened by it; we celebrate it, we repudiate it. The question haunts Americans in particular because engraved early on our brainpans is the dubious assertion that "all men are created equal." A less ambiguous equality, however, as in one man, one vote, is the essence of democracy; the notion that I'm as good as you are is at the heart of American informality. Yet equality also implies a leveling, a resistance to every individual's longing to stand out from the crowd, and thus were with that other basic American trait, the pursuit of success and distinction. Equality is not a subject that can be seen whole; it shows itself clearly in facets that catch the light at one moment. Perhaps these facets put together add up to a whole. I hope.

(9) The truth is that inequality has two strings to its bow, and equality but one. Equality is the world of fairness. Inequality at its worst is the world of privilege--unearned, uncaring, and often arrogant. But inequality is also the world of achievement, of excellence.

Here is an excerpt from the essay "The Economics of Wilderness" by Garrett Hardin, Professor Emeritus of Human Ecology and Biological Sciences at UC Santa Barbara. Read through it carefully, following his argument, testing his assumptions against your own. You may underline passages and make marginal notes on this examination sheet.

There is a public interest in making the wilderness* as difficult and dangerous as it legitimately can be. There is also, I think, a well-founded suspicion that our life has become, if anything, too safe for the best psychological health, particularly among the young. The ever greater extension of the boundaries of legal liability has produced a controlled and fenced-in environment in which it is almost impossible to hurt oneself--unless one tries. The behavior of the young clearly indicates that they really try. Drag races, road races, "rumbles," student sit-ins, marches, and tauntings of the police--all these activities look like the behavior of people looking for danger. I do not wish to deny that some of the activities may arise from other motivations also, for example, idealistic political beliefs. I am only saying that it looks like deliberate seeking of danger is part of the motivation of our obstreperous young. I think it is an important part. I think we would do well to tear down some of the fences that now deprive people of the possibility of danger. A wilderness without rescue services would contribute to the stability of society.

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